

CONFIDENTIAL
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Albania

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SUBJECT Airfields in Albania

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REPORT NO.

25X1A

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE

25X1X

Shkoder Airfield:

1. [REDACTED] Shkoder airfield has excellent road communications both in the direction of Yugoslavia (Podgorica) as well as toward the central portion of Albania, particularly in the direction of Llesh. A railroad line, which is planned to pass by Shkoder airfield, is under construction.
2. Auxiliary Landing Field No. 2, located to the northeast of Shkoder, is bounded on either side by a country road 4 meters in width. Another small country road, also 4 meters in width, joins Auxiliary Landing Field No. 3 to the main highway from Shkoder to Yugoslavia. [REDACTED] the Soviets planned to construct concrete runways in both of these auxiliary landing fields, as these areas are subject to flooding from the Kiri River.
3. With regard to Auxiliary Landing Field No. 4, [REDACTED] dimensions are actually 1,000 meters in length by only 200 meters in width,* thereby creating a long but very narrow landing field.

Berat Airfield:

4. With regard to the principal Berat airfield and the three auxiliary landing fields of that area, [REDACTED] all had excellent connections with good highways, constructed by the Italians. These highways, connecting the regions of Kucove-Banje-Berat, eventually lead both to the south and to the north of Albania and are presently reported to be in excellent condition.
5. These same airfields also have good connections with good country roads, which had been repaired during 1947-48, and are connected with Vlone, Durrës, Elbasan by asphalt roads. Work is also being done to provide a means of connection with the Durrës-Elbasan railroad, in order to facilitate even greater communication with the Albanian coast and the internal regions of Albania.
6. With regard to Landing Field No. 1 (as per sketch of Berat Airfield, attached to reference report), [REDACTED] it was presently being used by the Air Force School (sic) and, during the summer season, to base units of the Air Force. The runway of the principal airport of Berat (indicated as airfield No. 2

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in the sketch attached to reference report), will be laid in concrete during the spring of 1950; other installations and buildings to handle day and night flights reportedly will also be constructed.

- 25X1X 7. There is presently located on the airfield a squadron of the Albanian Bomber Air Force; the aircraft of this unit consist of Soviet bombers of the "Iljuskina" type. The headquarters of a Soviet transport squadron is also located on this airfield, and [REDACTED] the field is often covered with Soviet transport planes unloading and loading (unspecified) materials.
- 25X1X 8. [REDACTED] the runways of the remaining two auxiliary landing fields (listed as No. 3 and 4 respectively in the sketch attached to reference report), will be levelled and built in concrete during 1950.
- 25X1X 9. With regard to the Soviet activities referred to above, [REDACTED] the Soviets appear to have the intention of creating a powerful air base in the Berat region; when the runways will all be laid in concrete, the principal airport and the three auxiliary landing fields would be able to handle the deployment of some 500 aircraft.

Sarande Airfield:

10. Sarande airport is connected with Gjinokaster by a good mountain road; in the south there is a small asphalted road which leads to the Greek frontier. In addition, it has good connections with Butrint Lake which, in turn, is joined to the Gulf of Butrint by a "free" (sic-"libero") canal which permits the entrance into the lake of small vessels.
11. It was also reported that, in addition to the general modernization of the airfield which was to be effected by the Soviets during the course of 1950, as stated in reference report, a workshop for the repair of aircraft was also to be constructed. The Soviets reportedly plan to use this airfield as a station for their strategic air force, and it was planned that the runways of the field would be able to handle aircraft coming in from different directions.
12. It is learned that during 1949 the Soviets decided to rebuild the airport completely, so that it would be one of the largest on the Adriatic coast. They intend to create a great air base at Vlone for their aviation needs, and especially for their air transport service, which regularly delivers all necessary equipment for fortifications in Albania and for the Soviet units stationed in the area of the Gulf of Vlone and on the Island of Saseno. This materiel comes from the USSR and the satellites.
13. Vlone airport has a very good runway, which will be laid in concrete. There is information that the work has already started, but it is not known whether it has been completed. The airport is provided with all installations and equipment for day and night flights.
14. A squadron of Soviet pursuit planes is now stationed at Vlone airport as well as another squadron which forms part of a Soviet transport regiment stationed in Bulgaria. The latter squadron consists of 16 transport airplanes which are constantly transporting equipment from and to Albania.

Sea-plane Base at Vlone:

15. The sea-plane landing area is located in a small gulf near the port of Vlone. This landing area is now being enlarged and modernized. The work is being done at the expense of the Soviets. In fact, the landing area is occupied by Soviet seaplanes, which handle the transportation of equipment destined for the Soviet troops.

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- 25X1X 16. [REDACTED] the Soviets have the intention of transforming the Vlone sea-plane landing area into a large sea-plane base on the Adriatic Sea. For that reason, not only is the landing area being enlarged, but new buildings are being constructed, and installations and equipment are being set up.

Durres Airfield:

- 25X1X 17. A permanent airport for Albanian military aviation is said to be located in Durres. It was repaired and improved many times by the Germans during the last World War and is one of the most important airports along the Adriatic coasts [REDACTED] it would no doubt be strongly defended, since it would serve very well for air operations over the Adriatic Sea and against Italy, but especially for offensives over Yugoslavia and Trieste.

- 25X1X 18. The above-mentioned airport has two hangars which [REDACTED] were constructed by the Italians before the war.

19. At the present time some Soviet military aviation units are stationed here, provided with four pursuit planes, type "JAK-12". This airport is used for both Albanian and Soviet transport planes. Soviet planes arrive almost daily unloading various equipment and especially food needed by the Soviet military formations stationed in the Durres region.

Peshkop Airfield:

20. This is a permanent airport, used by the Albanian Air Force. It is quite large and located near the Yugoslav border, approximately 10 kilometers from the main road into Yugoslavia.

21. This airport has a very good runway 1,200 meters long and 600 meters wide, which can handle even heavy aircraft.

- 25X1X 22. The airfield was inspected by a Soviet commission (unspecified date). At the present time a small Soviet commission is stationed there, under the command of a major. [REDACTED] in 1950 the Soviets will begin to construct a modern airport by enlarging and equipping the one now in operation in Peshkop because the runway is very good and the airport, being in a good location, is of great strategic importance.

23. At the present time, a squadron of Albanian pursuit planes of the Soviet type is stationed at this airport. The commander of the squadron is a Soviet captain who speaks fluent Albanian.

Starove Airfield:

- 25X1X 24. This is an auxiliary airport located near the point where the Albanian, Yugoslav and Greek borders meet, and it is being used for training flights. [REDACTED] in the event of a conflict between Yugoslavia and Albania or the Soviet Union, this airport could be used to great advantage, since it has a good runway which can be approached from all directions. The runway is 1,350 meters long and 900 meters wide.

- 25X1X 25. So far, this airport has no special installations; however, if the necessity should arise, installations could be put up in a very short time. There are, however, three large buildings which look like barracks and which house the personnel. At the present time, a half-complement Albanian pursuit squadron, equipped with German Messerschmitts, is stationed at this airport.

26. [REDACTED] this field will be transformed into a large and modern airport when the situation requires it.

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Kukes Airfield:

27. This small auxiliary airport, which could be put to very good use, is located north of the town of Kukes. It is to be transformed into a small air base for Albanian aviation needs. In August 1949, four Albanian pursuit squadrons had been located at this airport. This does not mean that those squadrons were assigned there, but they were probably using the field as a base for maneuvers. During the current year, the Soviets intended to convert the airfield in Kukes into a large airport for the exclusive use of pursuit planes, because of its location in the vicinity of the Adriatic Sea.
28. The above-mentioned airport has a good runway, which is 1,300 meters long and 1,200 meters wide. It was further reported, but not confirmed, that there is a cement road at this airport constructed by the Germans during the time of their occupation.

Himare Airport:

- 29.. The airport at Himare is another in the group of auxiliary airports. It has a fairly good runway, which apparently was levelled and somewhat improved by Soviet experts in 1949.
30. The above-mentioned auxiliary airport is located some 45 kilometers (by air) from Vlone, and is therefore of strategic importance. In case of emergency it could become very helpful to Soviet aviation, whether for bombing or pursuit operations. [REDACTED] there are four wood and metal hangars, constructed by the Soviets, in addition to a small radio station.
31. At the present time, there are no aircraft of any kind stationed at this field; however, the Soviets are using it for their own air units, in flying planes from Bulgaria to Albania.

- 25X1X 32. [REDACTED] in October 1949 a Soviet pursuit squadron, with new jet-propelled planes, stayed at this field. This squadron came from Bulgaria for propaganda purposes. [REDACTED]
- 25X1X this squadron visited all the airfields of Albania, but that it was especially noted in the vicinity of Tirana and Vlone.

Kavaje Airfield:

33. This is an auxiliary airport which was levelled and adapted by the Soviets and Albanians in 1948. It is located on the road from Kavaje to Durres, at a short distance from the sea, so that it could be used to great advantage by pursuit planes for the possible defense of the Soviet naval base at Durres. Since the Soviets are working on the fortifications of Durres and the construction of certain important strategic objectives, this airport will also become increasingly more important. As a result, the Soviets are planning to modernize it in such a way that it can be used exclusively for military purposes.

Kruje Airfield:

- 25X1X 34. The airport of Kruje is located halfway between Llesh and Tirana, north of the capital of Albania. It is a rather good field and could [REDACTED] be fitted out as a permanent airport. This is still under consideration, however, since it seems that the Soviets do not want to make any radical changes, as the terrain is not really of the best quality, and the Albanians insist on improvements and equipment.
- 25X1X 35. An Albanian training squadron is based at this airport. It is reported that this squadron was recently transferred elsewhere, because there is no special housing for the personnel. In fact, there are only two small houses located in the vicinity of the airport. [REDACTED] the Soviets have apparently so far constructed two temporary hangars and a field repair shop for the planes and automobiles used at the airport.

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36. The Kruje airport is equipped with installations for day flights, a radio station and an old German radio goniometer.

Dibra Airfield (on Albanian territory):

37. The airport of Dibra is another auxiliary airfield, located approximately 6 kilometers west of the city of Debar (Yugoslavia), at the confluence of the Black Drin and the Zali rivers, and 560 meters above sea level.
- 25X1X 38. This auxiliary airport was put into operation in 1949. During the last war, it was operated to very good advantage by the Germans. [REDACTED] the Soviets constructed three hangars and one small repair shop for aircraft repairs here.
- 25X1X 39. At the present time, a squadron of Soviet pursuit planes is stationed here, and is engaged in escorting transport planes on transit flights over non-satellite (sic) countries. The field is 1,300 meters long and 1,000 meters wide.
40. [REDACTED] this airport can make a very good airfield, since its terrain is of good quality, which will make it possible to construct various cement runways for landing and taking off in any desired direction.

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[REDACTED] Not 1,000 meters by 2,000 meters as given in reference report. Even so, the width given here and the widths of other runways, given elsewhere in this report, seem highly exaggerated. It is possible that the term "runway" is used loosely here, and that the dimensions given actually apply to the size of the entire field.

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